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CHRISTIAN BENEVOLENCE RECOMMENDED AND
ENFORCED BY THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST.

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S E R M O N.

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CHRISTIAN BENTLEY'S RESEARCHES
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3.

A

SERMON,

PREACHED BEFORE THE

EDINBURGH PHILANTHROPIC SOCIETY,

IN ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH,

ON THURSDAY, JANUARY 11. 1798.

BY DAVID BLACK,

ONE OF THE MINISTERS OF EDINBURGH.

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1798.

Edinburgh, 6th February, 1798.

**AT a General Meeting of the PHILANTHROPIC SOCIETY
OF EDINBURGH, RESOLVED,**

THAT the Thanks of this Society be given to the Rev.
Mr Black for his excellent Sermon, preached this day at
their desire ; and that he be requested to allow the same to
be printed for the benefit of the Society.

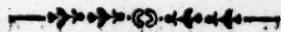
JOHN CAMPBELL, Secretary.



CHRISTIAN BENEVOLENCE RECOMMENDED AND
ENFORCED BY THE EXAMPLE OF CHRIST.

A

S E R M O N.



MATTHEW IX. 13.

But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice : for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.

CHRISTIANITY is a system of the most perfect benevolence. As it originated in the pure unmerited love of God, and was established in the world with the brightest possible display of divine mercy and grace ; so it inspires all those who become partakers of its blessings with a portion of the same spirit. Peace on
A earth,

earth, and good-will to men, mark its progress wherever its genuine influence is felt. By means of Christianity the sphere of human beneficence is greatly enlarged. The Gospel teaches us to consider every man as our neighbour: It breaks down the partition walls which passion and prejudice have reared betwixt man and man: It inculcates love to all, even to our very enemies; commanding and inclining us, "to bless them that curse us, to do good to them that hate us, and to pray for them which despitefully use and persecute us." Nor are the exertions of Christian benevolence confined to the bodily wants, or the temporal interests, of mankind only. The man who is actuated by its godlike spirit aims at something higher; and, sensible how vastly superior the concerns of the soul, and the interests of eternity, are to the things which relate only to a present life, his chief attention is employed about the means of promoting the spiritual benefit and eternal salvation of his fellow-creatures. In this generous design, the distinctions of rank, of party, and even of character, are overlooked. None, however poor, or abandoned, or despised, by the world, are excluded from the Christian's compassion, or deemed unworthy of his beneyolent regard;

regard : on the contrary, the more wretched the circumstances of any of his fellow-creatures appear, the greater is their claim, in his opinion, to the exertions of Christian benevolence ; and while he feels the most settled hatred and detestation of sin, he cannot but at the same time mourn over and pity the sinner.

SUCH is the nature of true Christian benevolence ; such the mercy recommended in the text, and enforced by no less an example than that of CHRIST himself. The occasion upon which our LORD spoke these words we learn from the 9th verse of this chapter. “ And as JESUS passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named “ Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom ; “ and he saith unto him, Follow me : and he “ arose and followed him.” Matthew was engaged in a profession reckoned most odious among the Jews, and generally held by persons of the worst character. He was a publican, or tax-gatherer ; that is, he exacted from his countrymen the tribute imposed on them by the Roman government, to which they were at this time under subjection. As the office itself was extremely unpopular among the Jews, who submitted with great reluctance to the Roman yoke, it was rendered still more

so by the fraud and extortion of those who exercised it: yet from among this number CHRIST selected one of his Disciples, whom afterwards he appointed to the office of Apostle. And as a farther proof of his condescension, he sat down to eat meat with a number of publicans and sinners, whom Matthew had probably invited to his house, that they, as well as himself, might enjoy the benefit of his divine instructions. This circumstance, as might have been expected, gave offence to the Pharisees; who, pretending to more than ordinary strictness in ceremonial observances, and trusting in themselves that they were righteous, despised others. With affected surprise, but with real scorn and contempt, they inquire of the Disciples of JESUS, "Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?" The reply which CHRIST made (for he did not leave it to his Disciples, who at this time were but imperfectly acquainted with the nature of his kingdom, to defend his cause), while it expresses his adorable condescension, strongly marks the character of his religion: "But when Jesus heard that, he said, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice: for I am
 " not

“ not come to call the righteous, but sinners,
 “ to repentance.”

STANDING in this place to plead the cause of a poor and wretched class of fellow-creatures, who are in general considered as outcasts of society, I cannot conceive any subject better fitted to excite compassion, or to remove prejudices from our minds, than these memorable words of our blessed LORD, spoken in pity to those whose characters bear a strong resemblance to theirs. With this object in view, I shall direct your attention,

First, To the great pattern of Christian benevolence which our LORD here proposes in his own example, “ I am not come to call the
 “ righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”

Secondly, To the influence which this consideration ought to have in leading us to shew mercy to our fellow-sinners.

I. IN entering upon this subject, it is pleasing to remark the inseparable connection which the wisdom of GOD hath established betwixt the doctrines and duties of our holy religion. There is no doctrine of Christiani-
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ty that has not a practical tendency ; nor is there any precept which is not enforced by evangelical motives. Our blessed LORD, in recommending compassion to the souls of men, proposes his own example ; and for this purpose declares the great end of his coming into the world, which was not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.

Two things naturally present themselves to our minds in reading these words. *1st*, The character of the persons whom CHRIST came to save ; and, *2dly*, His gracious design in coming to save them.

1st, THE character of the persons whom CHRIST came to save—not the *righteous*, but *sinners*.

To those who have been accustomed to consider the Gospel as a mere system of morals, enforced by the sanction of rewards and punishments, and designed barely to regulate and reform the outward manners of mankind, such a view as is here given of our state and character, in the sight of God, may appear strange. If (as some suppose) we were only feeble and imperfect creatures, standing in
need,

need, it is true, of divine direction and assistance, but possessed of powers for the performance of our duty, which only require cultivation, and apt to deviate from the paths of virtue, not so much from a perverse disposition of mind, as from a weakness of nature inseparable from humanity—if such, I say, were our character and circumstances, it is not easy to conceive for what purpose the SON of GOD should have come down from heaven to earth, led a life of pain and poverty, reproach and persecution, and at last submitted to the death of the cross. None of the works of GOD are in vain. In the various productions of nature, and in the extensive operations of Providence, we perceive evident marks of the most consummate wisdom and design. And can we suppose, that the greatest of all the works of GOD, “in which he hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence,” should not have an object in view suited to its grandeur and importance? No, it cannot be. “If there had been a law which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.” Had not the condition of man, as a fallen creature, been as completely helpless as it is miserable, so as to render it impossible for him to recover the lost favour
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and image of his MAKER by any merit or power of his own; we may be bold to say, those astonishing means would not have been employed which are now manifested in the redemption of the world by JESUS CHRIST.

BUT instead of the self-flattering views which the pretended sons of wisdom give of the dignity of human nature, and all-sufficient powers of man, the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise, by faith of JESUS CHRIST, might be given to them that believe. " The whole world is become guilty before " GOD ; for all have sinned, and come short of " the glory of GOD. They are all gone out " of the way ; they are together become un- " profitable ; there is none righteous, no, not " one." In conformity to these declarations, which perfectly accord with universal experience and observation, we are told by CHRIST himself, that " the Son of Man is come to " seek and to save that which was lost." And his Apostles testify, that " when we were yet " without strength, in due time CHRIST died " for the ungodly : " that " he suffered, the " just for the unjust, to bring us to GOD ; " and " was made sin for us who knew no sin, " that we might be made the righteousness of " GOD

“ God in him.” Thus all boasting is excluded ; every mouth is stopped ; the proud distinctions upon which men are apt to value themselves are levelled to the ground ; the decent and the profligate stand upon a footing in point of acceptance with God ; “ the same “ LORD, over all, appears rich in mercy unto “ all that call upon him, being justified freely “ by his grace, through the redemption that “ is in JESUS CHRIST.”

NOTHING is easier than to acknowledge in words that we are sinners in the sight of God. Many who make this acknowledgment, too plainly discover that they know not what they say, nor whereof they affirm. They confess themselves sinners ; but their hearts are unbroken on account of sin. They seem to have no abiding conviction of its evil nature or dangerous consequences ; and would highly resent it as an unpardonable affront, if faithfully told what is virtually implied in their own acknowledgment. They confess themselves sinners ; but at the same time they thank God they are not as other men. They have never been guilty of gross immoralities ; their characters have always been respectable in the eyes of the world ; they have, upon the whole,

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been

been punctual in their attendance upon the ordinances of religion; nor have they ever been charged with any flagrant violation of the duties belonging to their several stations and relations in society.—So far it is well. Such characters are worthy of esteem; they may be valuable members of society, and in many respects useful to their fellow-creatures; but still remember “one thing is lacking,” without which the most admired accomplishments, and boasted virtues, are of no avail in the sight of GOD. JESUS CHRIST came not to call the righteous, that is, those who are so in their own estimation, but sinners to repentance; and unless you have a deep conviction that you are indeed sinners, guilty, condemned criminals, and vile polluted creatures, in the eyes of your great Judge, you have neither part nor lot in the blessings of CHRIST’S salvation.

To promote this conviction, so needful and so salutary, let me entreat you, my brethren, instead of taking your rule of judging from the maxims and manners of the world around you, to bring your actions, and the principles and motives from which they proceed, to the standard of GOD’S pure and holy law; which, being
founded

founded in the nature and perfections of God, must continue unchangeable. So long as you measure yourselves by others like yourselves, and compare your conduct with that of the great bulk of mankind, it is certain you must err in the judgment you form of your own characters. The fondness and partiality which every one feels for himself, will always furnish some ground for self-complacency : But place yourselves as in the presence of God ; recollect his spotless purity, and the awful scrutiny which every part of your conduct shall one day undergo by Him “ who is the great “ searcher of hearts, and knoweth all things.”

—In making this solemn review, you will find that the commandments of God are exceeding broad, reaching not only to the outward conduct, but to the inward thoughts and dispositions of the heart ; so that those very actions of your lives which have been most highly esteemed among men, when weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, will be found wanting. Conscious of guilt, covered with shame, and stripped of every self-righteous plea ; if your eyes are indeed opened, instead of the boasting language of the Pharisee, you will be disposed to cry with the Publican, “ God be “ merciful to me a sinner !” You will join

with the Prophet in acknowledging, “ we are
 “ all before thee as an unclean thing, and all
 “ our righteousnesses are as filthy rags ;” and
 pray with the Psalmist, “ Enter not into judge-
 “ ment with thy servant, O God ; for in thy
 “ fight can no flesh living be justified.”

SUCH, then, is the character of the persons
 whom CHRIST came to save.

2dly, His design in coming into the world
 is to bring such to repentance.

To call sinners to repentance—what a noble
 and glorious design ! How worthy of the SON of
 GOD ! and how admirably adapted to our cir-
 cumstances, as guilty, depraved, and ruined,
 creatures ! “ To raise the poor out of the
 “ dust, and to lift the needy from the dung-
 “ hill, to set them with princes, even with the
 “ princes of his people ;” to restore immortal
 creatures, formed originally after the image,
 and for the service and glory of their Creator ;
 endowed with powers and capacities which
 assimilate them to Angels, and the highest or-
 ders of intelligent beings ; but fallen from their
 primitive dignity, lost to every thing excellent
 and praise-worthy, and sunk, by low earthly
 pursuits,

pursuits, to a level with the brutes that perish ! —to restore such, I say, to their original glory and felicity, to bring them back to the favour and enjoyment of their Maker, to inspire their souls with the love of God and of goodness, to render them happy in their own minds, and blessings to all around them ; and, finally, to prepare them for higher services, and nobler enjoyments in the heavenly world, where sin, and all the effects of it, shall be for ever done away—these are the great and glorious objects which the Gospel proposes ; and these objects it never fails to accomplish in all those who are brought under its influence.

To call sinners to repentance, is here said to be the great design of CHRIST's coming into the world ; because repentance is the first step of the sinner's recovery to God ; expressing, in general, that blessed change which takes place in the mind of the sinner when, “ delivered from the power of darkness, he is “ translated into the kingdom of God's dear “ SON.” Genuine repentance is always accompanied with a living faith in the Gospel. It naturally flows from it, and is maintained and cherished in the soul by those awful, yet pleasing, discoveries of the character of
 God

God which the Gospel exhibits. " Looking " on him whom we have pierced" by our transgressions, we learn not only " to mourn," but to hate and forsake, those sins, to atone for the guilt of which the LORD of Life and Glory suffered and died.

SUCH, in general, is the nature of true repentance—of that repentance which JESUS is exalted as a Prince and Saviour to bestow. The effects produced by it are such as evidently prove it to be the work of God. The man who before was a slave to divers lusts and pleasures, carried into every kind of wickedness by his own headstrong and unruly passions, and led captive by the devil at his will, is now brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Being made " free by the SON " of God, he is free indeed." Before this time, perhaps, he frequently attempted to break the chains in which he was bound. Tasting the bitterness of iniquity, perceiving the ruinous effects of indulged vicious habits on his health, his fortune, or his character, he often resolved that he would no longer pursue the paths which lead down to the chambers of death. But, alas! the force of temptation soon overpowered the strength of his resolutions.

Now,

Now, however, a most astonishing change is felt. What all the wit and wisdom of man, the rules of philosophy, the lessons of morality, and his own most vigorous purposes and endeavours, never could effect, the power of the Gospel has accomplished. It has subdued the most inveterate habits of sin, conquered the most ungovernable passions, and changed the very picture of the devil into the lovely image of God. "Old things are past away, and all things are become new." The drunkard becomes sober, the unclean person chaste, the profane swearer devout, the covetous man liberal, and the proud self-righteous Pharisee a humble believer in the grace of the Gospel. The power of sin is destroyed; its dominion in the soul is overthrown; and the true penitent begins to hate those things which formerly he loved, and to love and delight in those things which before were the objects of his strongest aversion.

THE call to repentance is addressed to sinners universally, without exception; "For God hath commanded all men every where to repent." The most moral, respectable, and amiable of mankind, cannot be saved without it; and the most guilty, worthless, and abandoned

bandoned of our fellow-creatures, will not be rejected if truly possessed of it. "Know ye
 "not (says the Apostle, 1 Cor. vi. 9—11.),
 "that the unrighteous shall not inherit the
 "kingdom of God. Be not deceived ; neither
 "fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor
 "effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with
 "mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor
 "drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners,
 "shall inherit the kingdom of God." Persons of the characters here described, who live and die impenitent, are evidently excluded from any inheritance in the kingdom of CHRIST and of God. But the Apostle adds, "And
 "such *were* some of you ; but ye are washed,
 "but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified,
 "in the name of the LORD JESUS, and by the
 "Spirit of our God." The Scripture abounds with instances of some of the greatest sinners who have obtained mercy. At present, I shall select two, which appear peculiarly well suited to the occasion of our meeting. The first is the instance of Zaccheus, who, from a rapacious publican, became a genuine disciple of CHRIST. This man, it should seem, from mere motives of curiosity, climbed up into a sycamore tree to see JESUS, who was to pass that way. Judge how great his surprise must

must have been, when JESUS, coming to the place where he was, looked up, and, like one who had long been acquainted with him, addressed him in these words: "Zaccheus, make haste and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house." The word of CHRIST was accompanied with power; for at once Zaccheus obeyed the SAVIOUR's call, and received him joyfully, not only into his house but his heart. And as an evidence of the happy change which divine grace had wrought in the disposition of his mind, he declares, "Behold, LORD, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." The other instance of the SAVIOUR's power and grace, not less remarkable than the former, is that of the woman in the city which was a sinner, who came with an alabastrer box of ointment into the house of one Simon a Pharisee, where JESUS sat at meat, and began to wash his feet with her tears, and to wipe them with the hairs of her head, and to anoint them with the ointment. Simon, perceiving this, wondered how our LORD could allow a woman which was a sinner, that is, one who had formerly been of a notoriously bad character, to approach him. But instead of treat-

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ing this poor weeping penitent with cruel disdain; instead of thrusting her away from his presence as unworthy of his regard, saying, "Stand by, for I am holier than thou"—the compassionate REDEEMER vindicates her cause, reproves the self-righteous Pharisee, relieves her anxious mind with the gracious assurances of pardon; and declares, that because much had been forgiven her, therefore she loved much.

HERE let it be observed, how vastly they mistake the nature of the doctrine of grace, and misrepresent its genuine tendency, who consider it as injurious to the interests of morality. Did the Gospel indeed give any encouragement to sinners continuing in sin, and determined to hold fast their transgressions; did it flatter them with the hopes of impunity in a course of iniquity; or lead them to expect the enjoyment of future happiness in the neglect of that holiness, without which no man shall see the LORD—then the charge would be just, and to preach the doctrine of free grace and justification by faith alone, would be not only dangerous to society, but ruinous to the souls of men. But is not the very reverse of all this the truth? Is it not the professed design of the Gospel "to call sinners to repentance?" Has not GOD the FATHER,
"having

" having raised up his Son **JESUS**, sent him to
 " bless us, by turning away every one of us
 " from his iniquities?" And does not " the
 " grace of God, which bringeth salvation,
 " teach men, that, denying ungodliness and
 " worldly lusts, they should live soberly, righ-
 " teously, and godly, in the world?" The
 Gospel, it is true, gives encouragement to the
 greatest sinners:—But what *kind* of encourage-
 ment? Does it encourage to sin, because grace
 abounds; or afford the least ground to hope,
 that at any future period, by confessing our sins,
 and imploring mercy in the name of **CHRIST**,
 we may obtain pardon? No. On the contrary,
 it strongly urges the danger of delay, and
 removes the chief ground of presumption, by
 assuring us, that repentance is not in our own
 power, but the gift of God. It reveals the
 pardoning love of God as an encouragement
 to instant, speedy, immediate, repentance. The
 language of the Gospel is, " Behold, now is
 " the accepted time; behold, now is the day
 " of salvation. Seek ye the **LORD** while he
 " may be found, call ye upon him while he is
 " near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and
 " the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let
 " him return unto the **LORD**, and he will have
 " mercy upon him, and to our God, for he
 " will abundantly pardon."

HAVING thus endeavoured to illustrate the great pattern of Christian benevolence exhibited by CHRIST himself, "who came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance," I come now, as was proposed,

II. To point out the influence which this consideration ought to have in leading us to shew mercy to our fellow-sinners.

"BUT go ye and learn what that meaneth, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." In these words our LORD refers to a passage in the prophecies of Hosea (chap. vi. 6.): "For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice:" to which allusion is made more than once in the New Testament. The meaning of the words, in connection with the passage before us, is plainly this, that mercy to the souls of men is far more acceptable and pleasing to GOD than the strictest regard to mere outward observances, where the spirit of true religion is wanting. In all ages men have been exceedingly prone to substitute the form, in place of the power, of godliness, by a rigorous adherence to the mere external parts of worship, or even sometimes to their own vain traditions; while they have omitted "the weightier matters of the law, judgment,

“ judgment, mercy, and faith.” Such would do well to consider the *meaning* of this scripture, and, in general, “ the end of the commandment ; which is, charity out of a pure heart and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned.”

UPON this part of the subject a variety of considerations press upon our minds. But not to fatigue your attention, I shall only mention the two following :

1st, OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, by coming into the world to call sinners to repentance, hath taught us the unspeakable value of the souls of men.—Surely those souls, to redeem which the SON of GOD became an inhabitant of our guilty world, and submitted to the most awful and excruciating sufferings, must be infinitely precious in the sight of GOD. If we estimate the value of any thing from the regard that is paid to it by wise and capable judges, what shall we think of the value of a single immortal soul, ransomed at such a price, and saved from everlasting destruction, by such a variety of astonishing means? Well might the great Preacher of righteousness say, “ What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain
“ the

“ the whole world, and lose his own soul?
 “ Or what shall a man give in exchange for
 “ his soul?” Suppose a man possessed of the
 whole world, of all its honours, riches, and
 pleasures; yet what a poor compensation were
 these for the loss of an immortal soul! “ The
 “ eternal salvation of one soul (says an excel-
 “ lent Author) is of greater importance than
 “ the temporal salvation of a whole kingdom
 “ or empire for ten thousand ages, or indeed
 “ any given duration of time; because there
 “ will come up a point in eternity, when that
 “ one soul will have existed as many ages as
 “ all the individuals of a kingdom, ranged in
 “ close succession, will altogether have existed
 “ at that given period. Therefore one soul
 “ is capable of a larger share of happiness or
 “ misery, to an endless duration, than all the
 “ inhabitants of a whole kingdom are capable
 “ of in ten thousand ages.”—Shall we not
 then, brethren, in the different stations in which
 Providence hath placed us, account it our high-
 est honour and privilege to be workers toge-
 ther with God in promoting the salvation of
 immortal souls? especially when I add,

2dly, THAT our LORD JESUS CHRIST, by his
 example as well as doctrine, hath taught us,
 that none of our fellow-sinners are beyond the
 reach

reach of mercy.—The gracious REDEEMER, as we have had occasion to observe, was not ashamed to be called “the Friend of publicans and “sinners.” While he boldly reprov’d vice of every kind, and in his own character “was holy, harmless, and undefiled, and separate “from sinners,” he scrupled not to converse with persons of every description, with a view to their instruction and reformation, that he might reclaim sinners from the error of their way, and “turn the disobedient to the wisdom of the just.” In this, as in other respects, “he hath left us an example, that we “should follow his steps.” He hath taught us not to overlook or despise any of our fellow-sinners, however far they may have erred from the right path; but, while we hold their crimes in just abhorrence, and keep at an awful distance from their abominable practices, to shew pity to their souls, by employing all the means in our power to lead them to repentance, “that they may recover themselves out “of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.”

UPON these principles, and with these great and important objects in view, the PHILANTHROPIC SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH has been formed;

formed ; at whose request I now address you. It took its rise from the pious and successful endeavours of a few individuals, to recover from their wretched course of life some of the convicts in Bridewell, who seemed not altogether indisposed to listen to instruction. The good effects attending these endeavours suggested the idea of instituting a Society for the purpose of instructing and attempting to reclaim the criminal and profligate, wherever there might appear any reasonable prospect of effecting this salutary object ; and this suggestion, dictated by true Christian benevolence, meeting with every possible countenance and encouragement from the Honourable Magistrates of this City, and others of the most respectable character, led to the adoption of those measures which have been already laid before the Public.

It is not my intention, at present, to enter into a detail of the wretched circumstances of that miserable class of our fellow-creatures for whose benefit this Society has been instituted. Alas ! their condition is too well known to stand in need of any description ; nor, supposing it needful, would such a description be in all respects proper from this place. Suffer me
only

only to observe, that the alarming progress of vice and profligacy in this city has, of late years, greatly increased the number of those unhappy creatures who, sunk in sin, and lost to shame, infest our streets. To check, in some measure, this growing evil, it has been found necessary, within this short time, to erect a Bridewell, where criminals of different descriptions are adjudged to labour and confinement; the happy effects of which, in promoting the peace and good order of the community, are doubtless considerable. But still something was wanting to give this wise and salutary institution its full effect. Among the criminals brought into this situation, there are some not so hardened in vice as others, who have been so far influenced by the discipline and instruction received during their confinement, as to express an earnest wish to leave off their vicious practices, were the least encouragement given, or any means provided, that might enable them to procure, after their liberation, proper protection or a decent livelihood. But to what hand can they look for such encouragement or protection? Abandoned by the reputable part of society, unpitied by their cruel seducers, who have been the chief instruments of their ruin; the objects

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of general disgust and aversion, without a single friend or guardian, and surrounded only by their former companions in vice—what is to be expected, but that they will return to their former profligate courses, “and be—
“ come twofold more the children of hell than
“ they were before?”

A SMALL degree of attention to these circumstances must, I think, convince every feeling and unprejudiced mind, not only of the utility, but absolute necessity, of such an institution as the PHILANTHROPIC SOCIETY, where an asylum is provided for such of those poor forlorn fellow-creatures as, “having forsaken
“ the guide of their youth, and forgotten the
“ covenant of their God,” are convinced of the evil of their ways, and sincerely desirous to return to the paths of religion and virtue. In the prosecution of this benevolent design, the Society, though still in its infancy, have reason to hope their endeavours have already been blest with success. In the house which they lately procured for the greater convenience of superintending those under their charge, there are at present *seven*, and it is expected that a few more will soon be admitted. *Two*, under the protection of the Society, are now in service,

service, and doing well: other applications for this purpose have been made; but the Directors judge it expedient to refuse such applications till they have had an opportunity of making full proof of their sincerity, and can with confidence recommend them to families. • It is almost unnecessary to say, that the strictest attention is paid by the Society to the health, morals, and proper behaviour of those immediately under their care. Above all, it is their chief object to inform their minds, by instructing them in the great principles and duties of the Christian religion, from a full and deep persuasion that many of them “ are destroyed for lack of knowledge;” and that it is the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST alone, understood and felt in its genuine influence, that can effectually cure the depravity of the human heart, or lay a foundation for good conduct in the various stations and relations of life.

It is enough, I hope, simply to have stated these facts. With the wise and discerning, they will plead more strongly than the most laboured address to the feelings. Let me only add, that, without the immediate and liberal aid of the Public, the benevolent designs of the Society must fall to the ground. Hi-

therto, on account of the scantiness of their funds, they have been obliged to act upon a very limited scale ; but by the assistance of the friends of religion and humanity, with the blessing of God, they fondly flatter themselves, they will soon be enabled to extend their labours ; and that, to meet with general countenance and approbation, the object of the PHILANTHROPIC SOCIETY only needs to be known.

EVEN in a political point of view, the object of this Society is of no small importance. If their exertions should produce no other effect, it must be allowed, at least, that their tendency is highly conducive to the welfare of the community, and the temporal happiness of individuals. At all times, but especially in such times as the present, when increasing impiety and profligacy threaten the dissolution of all established order, to lessen the number of public pests and nuisances, and to restore them as valuable members to society, is surely doing a most essential service to the state, and must meet with the countenance and support of every man who wishes well to his country.

BUT this, it is to be hoped, will not be *all*
the

the fruit of their labours. There is a consideration of infinitely higher moment, which will be felt by those who are actuated by the spirit of true Christian benevolence. JESUS CHRIST, “ who came into the world, not to call the “ righteous, but sinners, to repentance,” and “ who went about doing good,” hath enjoined on his followers the exercise of mercy to the souls of men, and taught us by his own example the extent of this compassion. Here is the noblest field for exertion; the most delightful service in which any of the friends of JESUS can be employed. Christians, do we stand so much in need of mercy from Him whom we daily offend?—and shall we refuse to shew the like mercy to our fellow-sinners? Hath “ GOD, for CHRIST’s sake, forgiven us “ all our trespasses?”—and shall not the love of CHRIST constrain us to shew pity to our brethren who are perishing around us? “ Who maketh us to differ from others? and “ what have we that we have not received? “ and if we have received it, why should we “ glory as if we had not received it?” Grace, free, sovereign, unmerited, grace, is the cause, and the *only* cause, of the difference betwixt one sinner and another. And if, “ by the grace “ of GOD, we are what we are,” why should we
despair

despair of any of our fellow-sinners? Why should we limit the power and mercy of the Holy One of Israel, or cease to employ the most likely means for bringing the "stout-hearted
 " and rebellious, who are far from righteousness," to the belief and obedience of the truth, that they may be as "brands plucked out
 " of the fire?" Great are the compassions of our heavenly Father; wonderful the patience and grace of our loving Redeemer! "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye followers
 " of God, as dear children; be merciful, as your Father also is merciful; devise liberal things," and "let the blessing of them
 " who were ready to perish come upon you."

AND you, my respected friends, who are more immediately engaged in this labour of love, continue your exertions with unremitting diligence and alacrity: cry mightily to God for the influences of His Spirit to accompany all your endeavours; nor be discouraged though you should meet with disappointment, and find reason to change your opinion of many of those concerning whom you may have once entertained good hope. Such disappointments are by no means uncommon: Remember the work is the LORD's, and
 not

not *your's*; for "though Paul may plant, and
 " Apollos water, it is God that giveth the in-
 " crease." If your exertions fail in some in-
 stances, they may succeed in others; and the
 salvation of one soul (if but one), however little
 it may be considered in the eyes of the world,
 will be found at last an abundant recompence
 for the labours of a lifetime; for "he which
 " converteth a sinner from the error of his
 " way, shall save a soul from death, and shall
 " hide a multitude of sins."

THE END.

APPEN-

APPENDIX.

March 1st 1798.

THE origin and object of the EDINBURGH PHILANTHROPIC SOCIETY having been already pretty fully stated in the Sermon, it is only necessary, for the information of the Public, to add a few things relating to its internal management, and the different measures that have been adopted by the Society, from its commencement to the present time, in the prosecution of their general design.

THE first Meeting of the Society was held on the first day of August 1797; previous to which, the following Regulations were prepared, and, being approved of by the meeting, ordered to be printed and circulated in an address to the Public.

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REGULA-

REGULATIONS.

I. THE Society shall be denominated, "THE PHILANTHROPIC SOCIETY OF EDINBURGH;" and its object shall be to reclaim, to habits of virtue and industry, Convicts who have been committed to Bridewell, and other persons of similar character.

II. THE funds of the Society shall arise from the voluntary donations of its Members, and of the public.

III. THE Society shall embrace the earliest opportunity of carrying the design of the institution into effect, and shall consider themselves at liberty to apply all donations to immediate use.

IV. EVERY person proposed as a Member must be a benefactor to the Society.

V. A GENERAL Meeting of the Society shall be held on the first Tuesday of every quarter, at eleven o'clock forenoon, for the admission of new Members, which shall be by ballot, and decided by majority; and for the discussion of such business as shall be brought before them: 20 Members to be a quorum.

VI. THE Society shall hold their first General Meeting on the first Tuesday of August 1797, at which they shall elect a President, Vice-president, Secretary, Treasurer,

fur, Clerk, and Officer, and a Committee of twelve Members for the management of the affairs of the Society; one of whom shall always be one of the Magistrates of Edinburgh. The Committee shall continue for the first year; and thereafter three Members shall go out by rotation, according to seniority, every year; whose places shall be filled up by the Society at their General Meeting held on the first Tuesday of August thereafter.

VII. THE President, Vice-president, Secretary, Treasurer, and Clerk, shall, *ex officio*, be members of the Committee, and shall be annually elected by the Society, at their General Meeting, held the first Tuesday of August.

VIII. THE Committee shall elect a Preses, shall hold stated meetings on the last Friday of every month, and shall have power to adjourn their meetings, and to appoint a Subcommittee. The Preses on any emergency may call a meeting of the Committee.

IX. FIVE members of the Committee shall be a quorum.

X. THE Society shall request from the Managers of Bridewell permission to such Visitors as their Committee may name, out of their own number, or out of the Society at large, to have access to the convicts at all convenient or specified seasons.

XI. THE business of the Committee shall be to carry the benevolent designs of the Society into execution.

For this purpose, they, or the Visitors appointed by them, shall take frequent opportunities of conveying useful instruction to all persons under their care, whether convicts or others, by personal visits, and by furnishing them with books suited to their circumstances, to be purchased by the Society. They shall provide for such convicts as shew symptoms of amendment, on their discharge from Bridewell, and for all other persons under the Society's care, who appear to require such offices, proper lodgings for their reception in some retired part of the town, and in families that will attend to the reformation of their morals. They shall continue to the discharged convicts the same methods of instruction that were begun with them during their imprisonment. They shall cause all persons under their care to attend Divine service on the LORD's day. They shall provide temporary employment for them. They shall be empowered to lay out such sums of money as, along with the produce of their own industry, shall be necessary for their maintenance and clothing, when destitute of it. And when they shall be satisfied, after a sufficient time of probation, that their conduct can be depended on, they shall recommend them for servants in proper families, or to places of permanent industry.

XII. A REGULAR report shall be made once a month to the Committee, by the persons whom they appoint as Visitors, of the names and circumstances of such convicts and others as appear to be truly affected by a sense of their past conduct, and desirous of reformation; and also of the behaviour of all those who are under the Society's care.

XIII.

XIII. WHEN the expectations of amendment in any of the penitents are disappointed, the Committee, or the General Meeting on a report from the Committee, shall dismiss such persons from their asylums; but before dismissal of any who are or have been convicts, notice thereof shall be given to the managers of Bridewell.

XIV. THE Committee shall be empowered, as an encouragement to industry, to employ a sum of money, in proportion to the produce of every person's labour, in purchasing for them proper and comfortable clothing; and, as a further encouragement, shall be empowered, on putting them to service, or places of permanent industry, to lay out such a sum of money as they shall think proper, but not exceeding three pounds Sterling, in making an addition to their stock of clothes, that they may appear more decently in their new situations.

XV. THE Committee shall keep regular minutes of their transactions, which shall be laid before the General Meetings.

XVI. IT shall be the duty of the Secretary to attend to the general business of the Society and Committee, and to carry on its correspondence.

XVII. THE Treasurer shall manage all the pecuniary concerns of the Society. He shall pay out no money but by order of the Society, or of the Committee
of

of management, and shall lay quarterly and annual statements of his receipts and expenditure before the General Meeting. He may retain twenty pounds in his hands for immediate necessary expenditure; but when the surplus above that sum amounts to ten pounds or upwards, such surplus shall be lodged in the hands of Messrs Mansfield, Ramsay, and Co. Bankers, in name of the Society; and all money drawn from them shall be by an order, signed by the Preses of the Committee and the Treasurer.

XVIII. THE duty of the Clerk shall be to record the proceedings of the Society and Committee.

XIX. THE Society, when they elect their Office-bearers, shall appoint a special Committee to audite the Treasurer's accounts, none of whom shall belong to the Committee of management.

XX. THE Committee of management, or any individual member of the Society, may bring forward any new regulations, or may propose any alterations of the present regulations, at any General Meeting. All such proposals shall lie on the table until next quarterly General Meeting; or in case they will not admit of that delay, they may be referred to a special General Meeting, to be called for the purpose of taking them into consideration, on a notice of not less than fourteen days, to be given to all the members of the Society, either by billets, or by advertisements in the Courant, Mercury,

Mercury, and Advertiser ; and in either of these cases, the proposal shall be determined by majority of voices.

XXI. THE Committee shall have power to call a special General Meeting when any business of importance occurs that will not admit of delay, and shall lay the same before them ; the determination thereof to be subject to the rules established by the preceding regulations.

XXII. THE billets or advertisements for calling any special General Meeting shall always mention the business to be laid before it.

FOR some time, the females, who came under the charge of the Society, were lodged (conformably to the XIth Regulation) in rooms hired from private families; but this plan was very soon found to be liable to many inconveniences. Their scattered situation increased the labour of the Society; and, at the same time, afforded them an opportunity, if they were so disposed (without the Society's knowledge), of holding intercourse with their old companions; who are always ready, if they can, to draw them back into their former wickedness. Impressed with these considerations, and convinced of the great advantages that would arise from having the objects of their care lodged under one roof, and more immediately under their eye, the Society, some time ago, hired a convenient house in the West-bow, and appointed

appointed a Master and Mistress, who appear well qualified for the office, to take the charge of them. Since which time they have all behaved with the greatest propriety, with the exception of one, who was dismissed from the house as incorrigible.

THE number in the house is stated in the Sermon at *seven*; five have been since added, making in all *twelve*. They are from 15 to 30 years of age; and some of them have been supported for six or eight months by the Society's bounty and their own industry. Their work consists chiefly of spinning, sewing, washing, and smoothing linens. It is truly pleasing to observe the gratitude of these poor creatures, who in this manner are rescued from the very depths of depravity and wretchedness. Hard is the heart that would not melt at the sight. The silent tear of gratitude, mingled with contrition, is more irresistibly impressive than all the pomp and eloquence of language, and yields to the generous mind a refined satisfaction, which the selfish and sordid never enjoy, and which is sought, but sought in vain, by the gay and heedless multitude in the circle of dissipation.

THE Society consider themselves bound publicly to acknowledge their great obligations to the Magistrates of Edinburgh, for their active and cordial co-operation, without which their opportunities and prospects of usefulness must have been very limited.

THEY likewise acknowledge, with gratitude, the liberal

ral support which they have received from the Public. The donations made to them in furniture and clothes have saved considerable expence *. It is hoped the friends of this Institution will favour them with a share of their employment in the different kinds of work specified above, as these are not only the most profitable to the Society, but the best adapted to prepare the persons under their care for becoming useful servants upon their leaving the house. The Society engage, that the work shall be sufficiently done, and the charges will be regulated according to the usual rates.

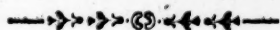
THAT the Public may have a fuller view of the nature of this Institution, the report of the Subcommittee of Visitors for the last month is subjoined.

* THE Society cannot omit this opportunity of returning their best thanks to Messrs Young, Trotter, Hamilton, and Trotter, for their very handsome donation of bed-clothes, to the amount of six guineas.

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REPORT

R E P O R T
OF THE
SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE
EDINBURGH PHILANTHROPIC SOCIETY.



THE Subcommittee, in consequence of the appointment of last Committee, met at the Society's house, on the Monday after, when they made the following arrangements :

THEY first appointed, that the hours of rising, for all persons received into the house, from the 1st of November to the 1st of April, should be at seven o'clock in the morning, and at six o'clock during the rest of the year, and that they should always go to bed at half an hour past ten o'clock ;—that they should work eight hours each day whilst they rose at seven o'clock, and ten hours when they rose at six o'clock.

THE Subcommittee then arranged the hours for working, air, exercise, and meals, and for attending upon family-worship and religious instruction, morning and evening. And they again intimated to the objects of their care, the Society's intention of reserving, for their own use, one-third part of the money that was produced by their industry.

The

THEY also settled with Mr Coutts, the Overseer of the house, the manner of keeping an account of the employment of their time, and the produce of their industry, and of his own expenditure for the support of the house.

THE Subcommittee have visited the house several times since, and they observe, with pleasure, the advantages resulting from these regulations. The regulation, with respect to time, has been pointedly complied with; the work has gone on with greater cheerfulness, and has been more productive. The hours of employment, and the produce of industry, have been entered each week in small books kept for the purpose, which are herewith laid before the Committee; and from which the Subcommittee are enabled to report, that the time of the eight persons now in the house, in the four weeks ending this evening, has been employed as follows:

709	hours in spinning lint,
208	— in spinning duck yarn,
100	— in carding and spinning wool,
96	— in sewing shirts,
38	— in washing,
176	— in the kitchen and work of the house,
20	— absent in going for work and returning with it, and getting wheels repaired,
189	— absent on account of sickness,
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1536	hours, or 24 days, of eight persons, at eight hours to each day; and the produce of their in- dustry has been L. 2 : 0 : 7.

THE Subcommittee further report, that the women in the house have regularly attended Divine service upon Sundays, except J—— F——, who has been seized with a spitting of blood, and seems to be in a very declining state of health:—that Mr Coutts has very humanely supplied her with tea and sugar, and other light food; for which the Committee should make him an allowance.

THE Subcommittee further report, that it appeared by Mr Coutts's books, that he has expended, in the four last weeks, *viz.*

Maintenance,	-	-	L. 4	12	11½
Miscellaneous articles,	-	-	-	5	4
One bottle of wine for the sick,	-	-	-	2	1
Paid to persons not admitted into the house,				9	0
					<hr/>
					L. 5 9 4½

IF the matters reported upon were more generally known, the Subcommittee are of opinion, that a benevolent Public would give a greater share, and a greater variety, of employment to those under the care of the PHILANTHROPIC SOCIETY; by which means their plans would be greatly forwarded, and the Society would be enabled to render their Institution more extensively useful.

EDINBURGH,
February 23d 1798. }

Expenditure

*Expenditure of the PHILANTHROPIC SOCIETY of
EDINBURGH, from June 30th 1797 to February
22d 1798.*

For maintaining and clothing convicts received from Bridewell, and others of a similar description, -	L. 68	9	5½
Furniture, -	29	2	6
Advertising, -	12	8	0
Contingencies, -	7	1	6
Messrs Mansfield, Ramsay, and Co.	120	0	0
In Treasurer's hands, "	23	11	0¾
	<hr/>		
	L. 260	12	6

Sums received during the above period.

Amount of Subscriptions, &c. -	L. 200	8	9
Collections at the Sermon preached before the Society, -	60	3	9
	<hr/>		
	L. 260	12	6

OFFICE.

OFFICE-BEARERS.

HIS GRACE the Duke of **BUCCLEUCH**, President.

WILLIAM COULTER, Esq; Vice-President.

Mr JOHN CAMPBELL, Ironmonger, Secretary.

Mr WILLIAM PATTISON, Haberdasher, Treasurer.

Mr JOHN GREIG, Ironmonger, Clerk.

WILLIAM COUTS, Pewterer in Edinburgh, and **Mrs COUTS**, Master and Mistress in the House.

COMMITTEE.

Walter Wood, Esq; late one of the Magistrates of Edinburgh.

Thomas Smith, Esq; one of the Magistrates of Edinburgh.

John Balfour, Esq; of Pilrig.

Rev. Mr Jones, one of the Ministers of Lady Glenorchy's Chapel, Edinburgh.

Rev. Mr Black, Minister of Lady Yester's Church, Edinburgh.

Rev. Mr Peddie, Minister of the Associate Congregation, Bristo-street.

James Haldane, Esq;

Charles Stuart, M. D. Physician in Edinburgh.

Alexander Pitcairn, Esq; Merchant in Edinburgh.

John Aikman, Esq;

Mr William Finlay, Baker in Edinburgh.

Mr James M'Naughton, Edinburgh.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND DONATIONS ARE
RECEIVED BY

The Magistrates, at the Council-chamber.
Sir W. Forbes, J. Hunter, and Co. Bankers.
Messrs Mansfield, Ramsay, and Co. Bankers.
Mr William Coulter, Merchant, High Street.
Messrs Phin and Pattison, Haberdashers, South Bridge.
Mr John Campbell, Ironmonger, Grass-market.
Mr John Greig, Ironmonger, South Bridge.

* * Donations of old linens, old clothes, and other things of the same kind, that may be necessary for the use of the persons under the Society's charge, will be very acceptable. Mr Campbell, Secretary, and Miss Kennedy, at Messrs Phin and Pattison, haberdashers, South Bridge, will receive and give receipts for all such donations.

